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barely two feet away. After feeding she carried away excrement exactly as though the young were in the nest. The young were able to climb up and down the steepest rock surfaces with no difficulty whatever. When placed in the open, they became more alert and after a minute or so clambered away toward shelter. The heat of the sun, though apparently mild, affected them severely so that they panted heavily and closed their eyes seeming almost overpowered; it is probable that never before had they felt its rays. The call note for food was a faint *tsee tsee*.

Two specimens secured at Williams in 1907 were identified in my previous paper as *Catherpes m. polioptilus*, after comparison with the very inadequate series of other Canyon Wrens at hand in my collection and in that of the Museum of the University of Kansas. Further study of these two birds, however, seem to indicate that they are intermediate between *C. m. conspersus* and *C. m. polioptilus* (the latter apparently being in itself a somewhat indefinite, poorly characterized series of intermediate groups). The birds in question are a female taken March 4, and a male March 21, 1907, both secured in the canyon south of Williams. The male is slightly darker above than the female, in this verging slightly toward *polioptilus*. It is large enough also to be included in the lower range of measurements of that form. The female, paler in color, agrees with *conspersus*, and is too small to come within the range of measurements of *polioptilus*. Viewed from above both specimens have the head almost imperceptibly darker than in *conspersus*. On the other hand the back is distinctly paler than in *polioptilus*. After careful consideration it has seemed that the two are slightly nearer *conspersus* and they are placed with that form.

37. *Troglodytes aedon parkmani* Audubon. Western House Wren. Fairly common. Nearly fledged young were found in a hole in an oak stub on July 11.

38. *Sitta carolinensis nelsoni* Mearns. Rocky Mountain Nuthatch. Common on the slopes and around the base of Bill Williams Mountain. A brood of fully grown young was seen July 8. The notes of this form are slurred and are given less clearly and sharply than the calls of the eastern subspecies.

39. *Sitta pygmaea pygmaea* Vigors. Pygmy Nuthatch. Common. A brood of young out of the nest was noted on July 10.

40. *Penthestes gambeli gambeli* (Ridgway). Mountain Chickadee. Common on Bill Williams Mountain.

41. *Hylocichla guttata auduboni* (Baird). Rocky Mountain Hermit Thrush. One was heard singing on July 14 high up on Bill Williams Mountain.

42. *Planesticus migratorius propinquus* (Ridgway). Western Robin. Robins were common in the town of Williams and in the surrounding region. Young just from the nest were seen on July 11 and 12.

43. *Sialia mexicana bairdi* Ridgway. Chestnut-backed Bluebird. Common. A few pairs were seen in the streets of town; and in the country this was the most common bluebird. Young fully grown but still in juvenal plumage were noted from July 10 to 14. On the latter date young were very common.

44. *Sialia currucoides* (Bechstein). Mountain Bluebird. Fairly common.

*Biological Survey, Washington, D. C., May 26, 1920.*

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Late Fall Occurrence of the Lutescent Warbler at Berkeley.**—A notable feature of bird life in the San Francisco Bay region during the current fall and winter season has been the loitering of Orange-crowned or Lutescent warblers (perhaps both) for a considerable period beyond their usual dates of disappearance.

On October 31, I found a bird dying in Faculty Glade on the University of California Campus, which was identified by Dr. Grinnell as a Lutescent Warbler (*Vermivora celata lutescens*). The specimen, now no. 39793, is preserved in the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. This postdates the previous record for this location by some 36 days.

On October 14, November 1, and November 15, and on intermediate dates not re-

corded, one bird and sometimes two, apparently like the *Campus* bird, were observed feeding in my rose garden on Grove Street near Cedar in Berkeley, and also in the high anise growing in a vacant lot next door.

On November 26 I observed a bird of this species in Carmel; this being the only instance at that place, in four successive Novembers in my experience. This bird seemed a trifle larger and may have been a Dusky Warbler.—BESSIE W. KIBBE, *Berkeley, California, December 5, 1920.*

**The Black-throated Gray Warbler in Santa Cruz County, California, in Summer.**—My friend, Mr. John Carroll, formerly an enthusiastic student of ornithology, recently sent me a number of bird skins. Among these is one of an adult male Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*) which he collected at Brookdale, Santa Cruz County, California, July 5, 1910. This, I believe, becomes the first summer record for that county.—MILTON S. RAY, *San Francisco, November 1, 1920.*

**A Flight of Harris Hawks.**—Mr. Frank Richmond, of El Centro, California, tells me that on October 22, 1920, he observed between 400 and 500 Harris Hawks (*Parabuteo unicinctus harrisi*). They were scattered over an area of about 80 acres in a field along the highway about half-way between Calexico and Heber. The birds perched on posts, hillocks and bare ground, and Mr. Richmond's attention was called to them by a party phoning that a flock of "eagles" was at that particular place. Mr. Richmond killed one of the birds to make sure they were not eagles.—W. LEE CHAMBERS, *Eagle Rock, California, December 6, 1920.*

**Red-bellied Hawk Eats Caterpillars.**—A Red-bellied Hawk (*Buteo lineatus elegans*) caught in a trap set near Firebaugh, Fresno County, California, was recently received by the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. In the stomach there were a number of insect remains. These were sent to Dr. E. C. Van Dyke, who identified them as larvae of the hawk moth (*Pachysphinx modesta*). This caterpillar when full-grown is from two to two and one-half inches in length, of a light green color, with yellow lines on the head and along the sides of the body, and feeds on various species of willow. Eight of these caterpillars were found in the hawk's stomach together with the remains of two mole crickets (*Stenopelmatus*, sp.), one beetle (*Coniontis*, sp.), one ground beetle (unidentified), and some grass and pieces of wood that doubtless were picked up with the food.—HAROLD C. BRYANT, *Berkeley, California, November 24, 1920.*

**Ring-necked Duck Again from near Corona, California.**—I wish to report the capture of an adult male Ring-necked Duck (*Marila collaris*) on December 9, 1920, on the grounds of the Pomona Recreation Club, near Corona, California. The bird was shot by Mr. A. P. Hapwood, of Upland, and was brought to me for identification. The bird was one of a band of four, all likely of the same species. This duck seems to be a rather rare visitor in this locality, as during several years of hunting on this Club I only collected this species once (see CONDOR, XVIII, 1916, p. 85).—WRIGHT M. PIERCE, *Claremont, California, December 11, 1920.*

**A Record for the Emperor Goose in Oregon.**—On December 31, 1920, while collecting birds along the ocean beach at Netarts, Tillamook County, Oregon, I came upon a number of Glaucous-winged and Western Gulls around the mouth of a small creek, and in their midst was an Emperor Goose, *Philacte canagica*. When I drew nearer to the group and dismounted from my horse, the gulls took wing but the goose walked leisurely toward the ocean. When quite close I shot it. It proved to be a female. This, I believe, is the first published record of the species for Oregon.

Referring to the Emperor Goose, Coues (Key to N. Amer. Birds, fourth edition) remarks: "Its flesh is rank and scarcely fit for food." I found, however, that while less fat than other species of geese, the flesh of this individual was very palatable.—ALEX WALKER, *Blaine, Oregon, January 24, 1921.*

**European Widgeon in Santa Barbara County.**—I wish to report the taking of an adult male specimen of the European Widgeon (*Mareca penelope*) by Mr. R. G. Fernald

of Santa Barbara. The bird was shot upon the grounds of the Guadalupe Gun Club at Guadalupe, Santa Barbara County, California, January 14, 1921, and was shipped to me in the flesh for mounting. It was in full plumage, with a marked development of coloration. The carcass, and such parts of the skeleton as were not required for mounting, we forwarded to the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, with the hope that they might prove of value to the research department there.—A. E. COLBURN, *Los Angeles, California, February 5, 1921.*

**A Feeding Habit of the Varied Thrush.**—From a ground-floor window of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, one commands a view of a bit of ground made shady and leaf-matted by a little grove of planted *Pittosporum* which hugs the eastern side of the building. Abundant rains this winter have kept this leaf-mat water-logged.

Here on January 10, 1921, I watched a Varied Thrush, presumably subspecies *naevius* of *Isoreus naevius*, as it foraged among the dead leaves. For a little of the time the bird was working within ten feet of my eyes.

Its constant mode was as follows: A short jump forward as it grasped debris in its beak, and a return jump so immediate that the whole was almost a single movement. A clump of debris, sometimes quite a clod, flew backward at one side or the other with each return jump. Usually the debris described a low arc, landing ten or twelve inches away, sometimes more, frequently less. Often successive plucks landed material on alternating sides of the bird with a slight corresponding change of body axis in each succeeding pause. Perhaps as often the leaves were landed for several times successively on the same side of the bird. Each pluck was followed by a moment of "frozen" pause, with head at about body level, after which the bird either repeated the operation or proceeded to devour the food which it had uncovered.

There was no movement of the wings and I was unable to perceive any intentional moving of debris by the feet. Naturally, tiny bits were occasionally disturbed by a claw in the backward jump. But, as a matter of fact, the feet rarely touched the leafy carpet once the bird had started, for it "swept" a rather clean swath down to dirt, like a carelessly shovelled path through the snow. This path was roughly three to five inches wide and decidedly tortuous, and the bird at times even reversed its progress to work over ground already cleaned, and to later start off on a side tangent.

Food seemed to be abundant as the bird picked up and swallowed frequently, apparently tiny morsels and good sized morsels, though I could not determine their exact nature. From its manner of picking and swallowing I guessed that it was eating such lower insect life as was uncovered, and possibly vegetational germinations which look so grub-like. Later I examined this ground, and found, when the leaves were scratched away, an abundance of worm and insect life, mostly larval, and some tiny plant germinations as well.

Naturally a "path" like this bird made would only occur in just such a situation, viz., a complete mat of dead leaves, water-soaked, and with abundant food concealed in and beneath them. Birds working on sod or bare earth concentrate their efforts on scattered spots, and often spend some moments on one hole, making the dirt fly as did the leaves.

On January 15, another bird which I watched from the same station, confirmed this manner of feeding. It moved even greater masses of material (variable moisture content no doubt affects the tenacity of the leaf mat), and at one time pulled away a leaf mass as big as its body. Once, when activity indicated a big morsel, a jay (*Aphe-locoma californica oocleptica*) suddenly descended from the tree above, and would surely have alighted on the thrush's back had not the latter scooted off just in time. Two rods away the thrush at once proceeded with its feeding. I noted, too, that the jay had arrived an instant late, and after a disappointed scrutiny of the "diggings" it flew.—J. EUGENE LAW, *Berkeley, California, February 16, 1921.*

**Anent Red-winged Blackbirds.**—About a year ago, after considerable urging on the part of ornithological friends (?), I undertook a somewhat comprehensive study of the races of the *Agelaius phoeniceus* group, with the idea of possibly being able to find some more exact formulae for their determination and of perhaps being able to consolidate some of the present subdivisions. This work has been carried on as opportunity

permitted, but there have been many and often long-continued interruptions caused by field trips and various other matters demanding attention. However, hundreds of Red-wings have been examined and measured in various ways, and all these measurements have been carefully tabulated. Ratios of certain parts to others have been worked out in the endeavor to find some system that might assist us to describe or to determine the different subspecies with greater ease, especially in the winter plumages. The results of all this work have been far from satisfactory, from my own point of view.

Unfortunately the conclusion has been forced upon me that this undertaking must be abandoned, at any rate for the time being, for the reason that there is so much other work that must no longer be delayed, and which will occupy the greater portion of my time for months to come, with new matters constantly arising to take up what little time there might otherwise be to spare. Hence it seems to me that the only thing to do is to accept the situation gracefully and to leave the field clear to any ambitious mortal who may allow himself to be drawn into this alluring but treacherous current.

There is one point, however, that I would like to touch upon in this short paper before dropping the subject. This is that the Bi-colored Blackbird, *Agelaius gubernator californicus* Nelson, or *A. phoeniceus californicus* as I believe it should be (J. Mailliard, Condor, XII, 1910, p. 66), was described from an intermediate bird. The type specimen is a female, from Stockton, San Joaquin County, California, with the wing of a male tied to it (*Agelaius phoeniceus* B. *gubernator* [Ridgway] Belding). Now it has been shown (J. Mailliard, loc. cit.) that the Red-wing inhabiting the country at the junction of the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers, about forty miles south of Stockton, approaches the San Diego Red-wing (*Agelaius phoeniceus neutralis*); yet the bird found near Stockton in a similar type of country, with no climatic or topographical barrier between it and the Tuolumne junction country, comes a great deal closer to the form inhabiting the region about San Francisco Bay whose habitat extends, apparently, as far south as Monterey Bay along the coast, up the coast through Marin and Sonoma counties, and along the inner coast range as far north, at least, as Snow Mountain, Colusa County. The Stockton bird has enough of the characteristics of *neutralis* to be appreciably different: it shows itself to be more or less intermediate, having a heavier bill than the Bay region birds, less black on the middle wing coverts of the males and, on an average, heavier streaking upon the heads and under parts of the females. It is very unfortunate that the latter was not taken as the type of *californicus*, in which case it might be possible to separate out the Tuolumne River race, although this latter seems to be rather variable, as I have taken specimens which were practically identical with others from Stockton. In fact, the Tuolumne River bird appears to be just about midway between the *neutralis* of southern California and the San Francisco Bay Red-wing.

A singular angle in the distribution of these races is that while the intermediate approaching *neutralis* appears to be the one occupying the greater part of the San Joaquin Valley in south-central California, at the extreme southern end of this valley there is an irruption of what is practically *californicus*. Breeding birds from Buena Vista Lake, Kern County, are not easily distinguishable, if at all, from those breeding at Stockton, while birds from Tejon Pass, a little farther south, are also nearer to these than to *neutralis*, which occurs only a little farther south still. It looks as if this southern interpolation of *californicus* must have reached that territory via the valley of the Salinas River and San Juan Creek through the Carriso and Elkhorn plains, from which there are one or two low passes into the San Joaquin Valley.

In taking measurements of Red-wings I have tried to find some way of expressing in more definite terms the differences in the shape of bills, such as thickness for example, by taking the distance from the nostril to end of bill (placing the posterior leg of dividers or calipers, which must be finely pointed for such work, in the actual opening of the nostril to ensure always starting from the same point), then dividing this by two and measuring the width of bill exactly midway between the two points. While this is a very delicate measurement to get exactly, in conjunction with width at base and length of bill it gives a better idea of the slenderness or thickness of the bill than anything else I have tried out. Its chief fault lies in the fact that it is so small a dimension that one or two tenths of a millimeter mean a good deal, and the slight inaccuracies one is liable to fall into while making a measurement so difficult to get exact, are magnified in importance.

Yet when one finds that this measurement in groups of 11 males from Marin County, 10 from Sonoma County, and 8 from Suisun, Solano County, averages 2.6 mm. in each group, while the distance from nostril to end of bill averages respectively 15.1, 15.8, and 16.1 mm., you have something to compare with a group of males (11) from Stockton, which shows the former measurement to be 3.0 and the latter 15.4 mm., making it apparent that the bill of the Stockton bird is appreciably thicker than any of the above groups. Again, a Tuolumne River group of 13 males has 3.3 and 15.2 mm. for these measurements, showing a still heavier bill than the Stockton bird.

While the variations among different groups of the same species may weaken the significance of this data to some extent, it is still valuable when used in conjunction with other characteristics. However, not having had sufficient opportunity to carry on these studies to a conclusion I will not dwell longer upon the subject, but will close by saying that I shall be glad to be of service, if needed, to any one indulging in this pastime.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, January 21, 1921.*

**Pileated Woodpecker versus Cooper Hawk.**—On January 31, 1921, while we were on our way to Mirror Lake, Yosemite Valley, we heard the loud, ringing call of the Pileated Woodpecker. Looking up we saw two rather large birds dashing through the tree-tops. The dark bird with the white wing-patches we recognized at once as a Pileated; the lighter colored bird turned out to be a Cooper Hawk. A pursuit was apparently in progress, but as the birds dashed through the branches of the tall trees it was impossible to be sure which of the birds was the pursuer and which the pursued. Both birds quickly left our range of vision, but a little farther on we heard gentle tappings and soon located the woodpecker. The hawk was there, too, perched on a limb a few feet away. The woodpecker was drilling and prying off chips with apparent unconcern, while the hawk looked on with seemingly hungry eyes. While we were watching, the hawk flew to a branch a few feet above the woodpecker. Pileated tilted his head and gave the hawk a sidelong glance and then deliberately flew toward him and drove him from the tree. With the hawk gone, the woodpecker went on with his drilling as though nothing had happened. Perhaps the hawk saw visions of a good meal, but lacked the courage to attack a bird so well equipped to give battle.—CHAS. W. MICHAEL, *Yosemite, California, February 2, 1921.*

**Two Unusual Winter Records for the San Francisco Bay Region.**—The White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), a rare winter visitor to this region, has once more appeared on the campus at the University of California, Berkeley, after an apparent absence during the winter of 1919-1920. A single individual was observed in company with two Golden-crowned Sparrows foraging in the shelter of shrubbery along Strawberry Creek, December 17, 1920.

On December 19, 1920, a stormy day, with heavy wind, at my home in Oakland, I was attracted by an unusual bird call. I could not identify the bird at this time because it flew too quickly into shrubbery, but subsequent visits proved it to be a Western Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*). Other known dates of this bird's visits to my garden, where it has spent most of its time in a large toyon berry bush, are December 26, 1920, and January 2, 16, and 24, 1921. Every visit has been announced by harsh, unmusical call notes.—MARGARET W. WYTHE, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, February 17, 1921.*

**An Afternoon with the Holboell Grebe.**—In the last issue of the Condor I read an interesting article on the nesting of the Pied-billed Grebe and its habit of carrying its young on its back. The writer of the article, Mr. Bancroft, says that the young were not carried under when the parent bird dived. Perhaps the following passage from my note-book, which treats of this Grebe habit, may be of interest:

On the afternoon of June 24, 1914, I loaded my canoe in the democrat and went with a friend to Silvermore Lake. After launching our canoe we found nine nests of Holboell Grebe (*Colymbus holboelli*), with 2/3, 2/2, 1/6, 3/1 and 1/4 eggs, respectively. While paddling around we noticed a Grebe swimming along with a young one on her back. At times the young bird was almost invisible beneath her feathers and wings as it moved

around. On our approach the parent bird dived with the young one on her back and carried it several yards under water. The young bird came up first and seemed bewildered or lost. We paddled up to it and my friend answered its plaintive peeping, whereupon it swam up to the canoe and into his open hand. We admired the curiously colored little fellow a while and then turned him loose.—A. D. HENDERSON, *Belvedere, Alberta, December 20, 1920.*

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The Cooper Ornithological Club, by amendments to its constitution duly approved by both Divisions in January and February, 1921, has created an executive body to be known as the Board of Governors and to consist of the ex-presidents and the acting officers of the Club. This reorganization seemed expedient in view of the gratifying growth of the Endowment Fund, in order to insure this Fund to the purpose for which it is being created, namely, for the publication of contributions to ornithological knowledge. The Fund itself will insure continuity of output.

Dr. Miller raises some questions in his "communication" in another column which have important current bearing. He urges that great care be taken in levying criticism, either privately or in print, to couch one's terms in courteous phraseology, so that no feeling of personal resentment can possibly be aroused. With this ideal we heartily agree. But it is not an easy thing to accomplish in practice, no matter how carefully one may strive with this very point in view. We believe that honest, outspoken criticism *does* function usefully, even when published (and, we believe, Dr. Miller would readily grant this). Direct, clear criticism is needed now and then, from one authority, of the writings of another. This is stimulating and beneficial, to the lesser students in the same field as well as to each of the principals themselves. If the nicer proprieties have been observed in mode of expression, so much the better. We will welcome contributions to THE CONDOR which are wholesomely critical in nature.

Part one of *The Birds of California* has appeared, and parts two and three are announced to come out shortly, with others up to 30 or so to follow. Thus the work so long in hand by Mr. William Leon Dawson has begun to bring tangible results. And no subscriber who has seen this first installment, of 64 pages and a full complement of colored plates, photogravures and text-illustrations, will be disappointed. This is far and away the best thing, from an artistic standpoint at least, that has ever been published concerning western bird-life; and the text is informational and entertaining to a

gratifying degree. We congratulate the author upon the high merits of this initial installment, and extend our earnest wishes that nothing will interrupt the continuity of issue until the entire work is published, with the same plane of excellence maintained throughout.

The natural history collections of Mr. Harold H. Bailey, formerly of Newport News, Virginia, have been moved to Miami Beach, Florida. They will there form the nucleus of a museum soon to be established in conjunction with a zoological park. Exhibits of mounted birds and mammals are planned, as well as a study collection. Five acres of ground have been allotted to the new project, and work has been started on the museum building. Mr. Bailey will be at the head of the museum and of the zoological garden. In connection with his new activities he already has well under way a book upon the birds of Florida, to be of similar nature to his "Birds of Virginia".

A letter received from Dr. Alexander Wetmore, now engaged in field work in Argentina for the United States Biological Survey, contains a suggestion of the many interesting discoveries he is making. Dr. Wetmore arrived at Buenos Ayres on June 21, in the winter season, and proceeded at once to extreme northern Argentina. There his work lay in "the strange and interesting area known as the Chaco, lying west of the Rio Paraguay and extending from northern Argentina north into Bolivia". Later he returned southward with the advent of spring, encountering various Argentine species then on their spring migration *southward* to their breeding grounds, and, still later, toward the end of July, certain North American shorebirds just arriving at their winter home. Brief mention of a falcon with "well-developed powder downs", of an "odd-looking Mimid" with "broad lateral apteria in the feather tracts of the sides of the neck that in life are bright orange yellow in color", and of a teal that habitually perches in trees, gives promise of future accounts of the anatomical peculiarities of tropical birds even more interesting than some Dr. Wetmore has already discovered in certain of our better known North American birds.